2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

while relations of a personal kind and kinship links between individuals run across their common frontiers and are compelled to do so by the exogamous rules obtaining in Luo society.

Several of the clans and maximal lineages possess sacred spears and other objects believed to have belonged to their founders. The best known sacred spear (*tong ma lisua*, spear of sacrifice) is the *tong* Alego, the spear of Alego, the founder of the JoAlego clan. In Ugenya the JokaGer clan have several such spears and there are others in possession of the lineages descended from Cuanya to the south of the gulf. Where there are important stranger lineages in a tribe they may also have their sacred objects, e.g. in Alego the KaLuo and the JokOgelo have sacred spears and the JoAgoro have a sacred stone and a sacred pot handed down from their founders. These objects are symbols of the unity of a clan or lineage and, by extension, of the tribe or tribal segment in which it is dominant, and they were used ritually in time of war or of common calamity, such as drought and invasion by locusts. They seem generally, if not always to be held by the senior line (*dho ot ma duong*) of a lineage or clan and are kept either in a granary or in hiding in the bush. The senior line is often called on by junior collateral lines to perform important sacrifices for them and the senior lineage ought to provide the sacrificial beast at ceremonies common to all the lineages. I was told also that while each lineage had its *won gweng*, 'father of the land' the *won gweng* of the senior lineage had chief prestige among them.

Some clans and lineages have certain ritual prohibitions (*kwer*), mostly on certain foods, particularly kidneys and liver. The Luo do not give the impression of attaching much importance to them and if a man and a woman observe the same taboo it is not in itself a bar to marriage. Reference must also be made to clan and lineage honorific, or praise, names. The *nying paak* is generally derived from the name of a paternal ancestor whose name is a lineage cognomen, e.g. Okwiri (see the chart of the JoOwila clan) can be called, according to the circumstances, *wud* (son of) KoOkelo, *wud* KaJeje, and *wud* Owila. These names are much used at communal gatherings, expecially at large beer parties.

A feature of clanship which would seem to be of some importance is the annual inter-lineage wrestling. Unfortunately, I only became aware of these shortly before I left Luoland and had afterwards no further opportunity to enquire further into the custom, or to discover whether it is practised all over Luoland or only in some tribal areas, such as U-yoma where the closely related collateral lineages wrestle for practice prior to the wrestling matches between the big lineages. Thus the Ko-Okwiri are matched against the KoObong, then these two lineages together against the KaAtuenga and KaAbudha, and so on. The lineages send a messenger to challenge the other party and when they meet an elder presides over the joint bouts and the exhibition matches between famous wrestlers on each side. The matches are said to occasion much excitement among the spectators.

The sketch given above of the Luo clan is only an outline delineating feature of it. A little detail is filled in here and there in the following

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

originally came from the north-west. I imagine that the original possessors of these beads had considerable settlements in the neighbourhood of the Maragolia Hills, and that beads were continually being lost in the fields, and now when a heavy thunderstorm comes it washes some of the surface soil away and exposes an odd bead now and again. The supply of the blue Nya-Luo beads is of course quite inadequate for the population, and many make up for the scarcity with the ordinary blue *kĭketi* bead.[1] Occasionally these ancient beads are green and yellow, but the usual colour is blue.

The Ja-Luo have a curious habit of shaving curved patterns on their heads (Fig. 11).

FIG. 11.—VIEW OF THE TOP OF A MAN'S HEAD; SHOWING HOW THE PATTERN IS SHAVED.

The young men often wear an armlet of cylindrical wooden blocks on the upper arm; the wooden blocks are coloured red with oxide of iron. A band similarly ornamented with wooden blocks is often worn round the forehead. Some of the older men wear the curved canine tooth of a hippo on the forehead. The tooth is ground down laterally till it is only about one-eighth of an inch in thickness; others wear the tooth of a wart hog attached to a necklace.

The Ja-Luo have a curious habit of standing on the top of an ant hill or in some prominent place on one leg with the flat of the other foot resting against the knee, reminding one of the attitude adopted by a stork; they will remain in this attitude quite comfortably for a considerable time. This habit is I believe characteristic of the Dinka and others of the tribes on the Nile south of Fashoda.

Miscellaneous customs.—If a person shuts the door behind him when he leaves a house, people at once say he is a witch doctor. If a wife does this to her husband, the husband will not enter her house again until she fetches a goat from her father and kills it. Similarly if a man is the culprit he has to kill a goat to avert the ill luck. If a house is struck by lightning and anybody is killed inside, the head of the village walks three times round the house with a red rooster and the house is then broken up and the wood utilized for any purpose.

Witchcraft, etc.—It is believed that people are killed by witchcraft; the person possessing the medicine has only to show it to a person in order to kill him; to save the person bewitched it is necessary to catch the wizard and to bring him to the patient and he can remove the spell, and the wizard has to pay a fine; this class of medicine man does not hide himself. There is a deeper kind of witchcraft which is only practised at night and with great secrecy. It is called Jamkingo; among the Gemi tribe many of the clan previously referred to who forge iron possess these powers.

[1] With the kind assistance of Mr. C. H. Read, of the British Museum, I examined the collections of beads at the Museum from various parts of the world, and I found yellow and blue beads of the exact colour and shape among the Egyptian antiquities and jasper beads identical in appearance to the Nya-Luo both from ancient Egypt, and also from excavations made on the site of some buried cities in Beluchistan.

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Bantu Kavirondo FL4
Nandi FL13

Among the Bantu people each clan appears to have its own particular totem, and this may have given rise to their custom of exogamy, but in Nandi each individual is said to have his own totem irrespective of the clan. Practically the whole of the Nilotic group appear to have the same totems, but, in some parts, there are certain variations from what may be called the standard list of forbidden foods. Thus, although the exogamy which exists among the Nilotic Kavirondo may have originally arisen from totemism, the present survival of the belief has lost its original character.

In all the groups the totems appear to be animals, no example of a vegetable totem has been discovered.

The Bantu group use the word "*Musiro*" to denote the totem and, contrary to the usual belief, the eating of a totem animal is not thought to be followed by death, but only by a severe skin eruption; and if, by any mischance, the meat of the totem is eaten, the evil consequences referred to can be averted by making a medicine "*daca*," extracted from certain herbs, and this extract is mixed with the fat of a black ox and rubbed all over the body of the patient.

Among the Nilotic Ja Luo the totems are called "*Kwero*," and there is a long list of "*Kwero*" animals which are forbidden as food to both men and women; there is, however, an additional list of food that women must not touch.

Upon no occasion is the rule of the *Kwero* relaxed, but, curiously, the animals on this "*index expurgatorius*" are considered malignant in their influence, and it is thought praiseworthy to kill them. Thus any "*Kwero*" animal can be hunted, with the exception of the crested crane (*Belearica gibbericeps*), which is, generally speaking, strictly preserved by all the Kavirondo. The Gemi tribe, however, do not consider it wrong to kill and also eat this beautiful bird. The Gemi, Lego, and Sakwa tribes can also eat the wild cat, called by them "*Oywang.*" The Ja-Luo often wear the teeth of the leopard and crocodile as ornaments, and the skin of the leopard and wild cat; this is not considered an infringement of the "*Kwero*" law.

Examples of the Totems of the Bantu Family.

Clan or Tribe.	Special Totems.
Kisesi clan of Awa Wanga	*Imbongo*, bushbuck.
Marama and part of Tsoso and Isukha...	*Kuru*, waterbuck or *Ikulu*.
Awa-Genya and Awa-Mrashi	*Liusi*, pigeon.
Awa Shekwi of Nyole	*Njofu*, elephant.
In Ketosh there are several, according to to the clan, but over a large portion the special totem is	*Makuyi*, a large black and white stork which appears in large flocks about November, it eats locusts.
Tasoni tribe (Ngaki section)	*Iswuu*, reed buck.
Ithako, E. Tsoso, S. Kabras	*Iwlongo* or *Ngawe*.
Probably the totem most common in Kabras is	*Mbinkalo*, white ants in the flying stage (but cooked). They can be eaten raw, but not when cooked.

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Bantu Kavirondo FL4
Nandi FL13

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The Totems (Kwero) of the Nilotic Group.

	Name in Tho-Loo.		Name in Tho-Loo.
Crocodile... ...	*Nyang.*	Nile monitor (lizard)	*Ngnech.*
Hyæna	*Ndiek.*	Python	*Nyelo.*
Leopard	*Okwash.*	Mongoose	*Gori gori.*
Baboon	*Bim.*	Rock hyrax... ...	*Kumnĕr.*
Monkey	*Ongnur* (*Cercopithecus sp.*).	Tortoise	*Upuku.*
Wild cat	*Ogwang.*	Colobus monkey ...	*Kuru.*
Jackal	*Buwen.*	Wart hog	*Imbirri.*
Vulture	*Achut-th.*	Frog...	*Ogwan.*
Crow	*Agako.*	Crested crane ...	*Iwang.*
Kite	*Otenga.*	Ground hornbill ...	*Arumtich.*

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[784]

The following are in addition "*Kwero*" or "tabu" to the women:—Fowls, eggs, elephant, hippopotamus, sheep (latter only among Kisumu and Gemi).

The women's "*Kwero*" are not serious ones, *i.e.*, a breach of the law is not followed by death.

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The Totems of the Nandi Group.

	Nandi Name.		Nandi Name.
Hyæna	*Magetiet.*	Water tortoise ...	*Chebkukuchet.*
Jackal	*Leluet.*	Chameleon	*Nyeretiat.*
Kite	*Chebineret.*	Crested crane ...	*Kungonyot.*
Buzzard	*Chebkukusiot.*	Elephant	*Beliot.*

The elephant, although looked upon as a totem, can be eaten without evil effects.

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I omitted to mention above that the Kadimu people, who live on the Lake near the mouth of the River Nzoia, believe that they are descended from the python; these reptiles are looked upon as sacred and annual sacrifices are made upon a hill in Kadimu to the common ancestor. The Kadimu people are a Bantu tribe which has adopted the language of the Nilotic Ja-Luo, and it is thus the only Bantu tribe in the country which looks upon its totem as its ancestor.

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Certain snakes, however, are looked upon as sacred animals among some of the Unyamwezi clans and it is highly probable that, as among the Kadimu, this is due to the belief that the snake was their common ancestor. Many Wanyamwezi consider it a deadly sin to kill a snake, and one occasionally meets an individual belonging to one of these clans who is said to be immune from the effects of snake poison.

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The totems of the Koromojo people who live north of Mount Elgon, are snakes, frogs, the monitor lizard, the hyæna, and the cheetah; they believe they will die

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Bantu Kavirondo FL4

The Isira Custom.

L B 628

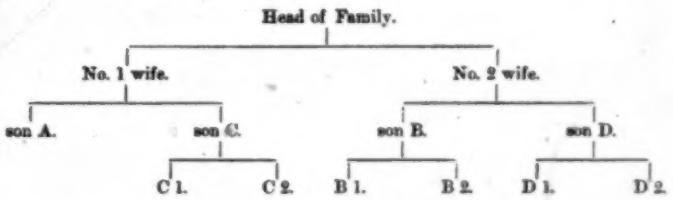
In Sir Harry Johnston's recent work on the Uganda Protectorate, reference has been made to the presence of a vendetta custom among the Kavirondo, in which, if a man is killed, the sons of the deceased endeavour to hunt down the murderer, and if they fail, the sons again carry on the feud.

This custom doubtless accounted for much petty bloodshed in times past. I am glad to say, however, that it is dying out now to a great extent, and one murder no longer leads to a succession of crimes.

L B 628 784

The old blood feuds are, however, still recognised, and a man may not eat with a person with whom his branch of the family has a blood feud, or, it is believed, he will surely die within 24 hours.

To make it clear how this curse operates, I append an example in which a man kills his brother by a different mother.



The feud commences by A killing B. After this D will not, nor dare, eat with A or C. In the next generation B 1, B 2 and D 1, D 2 cannot eat with A or C, neither can they eat with C 1 and C 2, although they are only nephews of the murderer, but they belong to that branch of the family through their common mother.

Curiously enough, although this custom is hinged on the female line, it only applies to the males of the family; the females can eat with the descendants of the tainted line without evil effects.

The men are desperately afraid of unconsciously infringing the *tabu*; if a member of a murderer branch has cooked his food in a certain pot, that pot is defiled for any representative of the other branch; thus when a number of men are travelling together and the cooking pots are few, the situation becomes rather difficult at times and numerous disputes arise. Everything connected with this custom is called "*Isira*" by the Bantu Kavirondo.

The custom has been adopted in a half-hearted manner by the Nilotic Ja-Luo, but it is not carried out in such a persistent manner, and rarely goes so far as the defilement of the cooking utensils above described.

B 628

Among the Bantu people of the Kakumega Tiriki, this *Isira* custom is often indirectly taken advantage of in rather a cunning way as a means of obtaining revenge for their private grievances. Suppose a member of a certain clan has

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

near the entrance to the village, so that they can watch over any attempt to steal cattle. The hut which is directly opposite the gate of the village is usually that of the principal wife of the village head-man. There is much the same superstition as among the Bantu Kavirondo about shutting the door of a house behind a person who has just left it.

Unmarried men go naked. Married men who have children wear a

4nd. HUSBAND AND WIFE, 14-4.11

small piece of goat skin, which, though quite inadequate for purposes of decency, is, nevertheless, a very important thing in etiquette; for a married man with a child must on no account call on his mother-in-law without wearing this piece of goat skin. To call on her in a state of absolute nudity would be regarded as a serious insult, only to be atoned for by the payment of goats. Even if under the new dispensation a man

[(i.e.) a very bad one; more the Bantu equivalent to divorce if it occurs between husband and wife. (see p. 752-not processed). -Analyst]

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

originate all the larger lineages which provide the political framework of Luo society.

My illustrations of Luo lineage structure are taken from material on one large lineage group, that of Karachuonyo. This group inhabits the present locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, and in 1947 had a population of 90,000. I lived here from December 1946 till March 1947 and again for the month of September 1947. On each occasion I took with me a Luo student from Makerere College as interpreter and research assistant. I went through my material with a dozen or more of the Luo students at Makerere who themselves came from a number of different locations. Clearly, from such a short period in the field, my results are not complete, but in so far as they add to the information at present available, I present them for what they are worth. The map (Fig. 3) shows all the Luo locations of South Kavirondo, those of the Karachuonyo group and of the other lineages which claim descent from the common ancestors, Jook and his wife Awando, being shown in heavy type.

III. THE FAMILY

The most prominent cultural features of the Luo landscape are the euphorbia hedges, at stages of growth varying from that of 3-foot saplings to that of 30-foot trees, dating each site by their planting at the time of first occupation, and throwing a thick green wall round the cluster of huts within. This residential unit is the *dala* or *pacho*, and will be referred to as the homestead. The dwelling-huts ranged in a circle round the inside of the hedge are those of married women, the chief wife's hut being at the side opposite to the entrance through the hedge, and the huts of subsequent wives arranged in alternate succession on either side of that of the chief wife.[1] The husband and head of the homestead divides his time between the huts of his wives, the chief wife's hut taking precedence,[2] having no other quarters of his own except an *ebila*, a smaller hut usually in the centre of the circle, which was his only place of privacy. There is a belief that if the husband leaves the homestead to escape from the bickering of his wives he will die on re-entering it, and the *ebila* provides him with a safer sanctuary. It was also a vantage point from which he could keep a watchful eye on his cattle in the nearby kraal. The homestead is the spatial correlate of the compound polygynous family and is subdivided into the households of its component elementary families. Just as *dala* or *pacho* applies both figuratively to the social group and concretely to the homestead occupied by it, so *ot* applies both to house and to the household of wife and children occupying it. The title of the head of the homestead and its family group is *nyaka dala* or *nyaka pacho*; *jodong'* (elder) may be substituted for *nyaka*. Correspondingly, each wife is *nyaka ot*, signifying that she is head of the household, proprietress of its hut and all other effects, and leader of its domestic and economic activities. The word *nyaka* is usually translated as 'father', and is in fact the classificatory term for all agnates of the generation senior to the speaker, including the 'genitor'. But its use with reference to all married women,

[1] See Gluckman in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde. The Luo family has a "house-property complex" of the Zulu type but in a less extreme form.

[2] This is often striking in detail. The husband's most valuable possessions are also kept there. With the present changes in hut design the chief wife's hut is often of the new and more pretentious rectangular pattern, while a second wife's may also be rectangular but smaller, and the third wife's still of the traditional circular type.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

853 when a mother is eating she will hear her child cry out [854] for some of her food.

From six to nine months, gruel continues to be the staple article of diet. In certain strict families adult food is not given until the child is over a year old. Babies fed on cow's milk begin using adult food during the first or second month.

Restrictions on the suckling of babies. It is considered a [784] breach of taboo for a nursing mother to suckle her [761] neighbour's child. This restriction is based on the fear that some woman with poor milk may, in suckling a [177] baby, kill it. One of my informants pointed out that in the early days of missionary work an attempt to break this taboo had failed. She said that many of the children thus suckled had died, and the attempt had been abandoned. One exception to the restriction, however, is [603] that of a mother-in-law. In cases of necessity she is permitted to suckle her daughter-in-law's child because it is assumed that her milk has stood the test.

853 595 In rare instances there seems to be different treatment of male and female children in a polygamous home with regard to suckling. Some of my informants stated that inter-suckling is permitted if all the nursing mothers have female babies.

[587] Nevertheless, the taboo against inter-suckling of male babies is reinforced by the fact that it is possible for a son to marry one of his father's younger wives. Hence a woman refuses to suckle a child who might become her husband on the death of the father.

853 [177] The social restriction with regard to the suckling of infants is still observed with rigidity, and there are no evidences of a change even under the impact of modern ideas.

Methods of feeding. No force is used in feeding young babies. A little gruel in a small container is put to the

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

843 Dietary restriction may also be a matter of family
262 habit or taboo. Thus a mother may inform her children
while they are young that a certain kind of food is not to
[753] be eaten by members of their family. This restriction
may result from a fear of spreading certain diseases,
generally skin ailments, latent in that particular family
group. The restriction does not apply to others who are
free from the supposed disease. When a woman gives
birth to a baby her habits in these respects do not
change.

[756] A dietary restriction may also result from the instruc-
tion of a medicine man, as in the case of a woman who
has had no child for a long time. During his treatment
[784] the medicine man gives instruction on taboos and com-
pulsory dietary restrictions. Dislike of a certain food
during pregnancy may also result from personal dis-
agreeable experience. This is also generally assigned to
the will of the child. Restraints of a family origin, as well
as those imposed by the medicine man and acquired
from personal experience, are more strictly adhered to
than the traditional restrictions.

843 *Medicinal restrictions.* The list of medicines that expec-
278 tant mothers may not take is a small one. Apart from
177 the traditional strong purgatives and medicines for kill-
ing worms, modern drugs like quinine and strong Euro-
pean laxatives are eliminated, such measures being
designed to prevent abortion or premature birth.

843 *Social relationship.* Superstitions affecting expectant
[177] mothers have very largely yielded to the influence of
Christianity, but we find remnants of old regulations,
[516] such as those connected with sitting, still observed by
women. An expectant mother is required to sit with a
straight back. Neither should she put one of her legs on
top of another, because it is believed that the expected
child in assuming a similar position would be difficult to